

~~TOP SECRET~~ - SENSITIVE

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(S) or (E)  
Date 3/21/75

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

It is my view that the Soviet Union has now deliberately initiated a public test of our intention that can determine the future course of world events for many years to come.

If we allow the offensive capabilities presently in Cuba to remain there, I am convinced that sooner or later and probably sooner we will lose all Latin America to Communism because all credibility of our willingness to effectively <sup>resist</sup> ~~view~~ Soviet military power will have been removed in the ~~xxxx~~ eyes of the Latins. We can also expect similar reactions elsewhere, for instance in Iran, Thailand, and Pakistan.

I, therefore, believe that the survival of our nation demands the prompt elimination of the offensive weapons now in Cuba. This cannot be negotiable and any course of action leading

leading to negotiation on this issue, which inevitably would be prolonged, would have the results outlined above.

The question remains how best to achieve the prompt elimination of these weapons from Cuba. I recognize fully the public opinion difficulties involved in a surprise attack but believe that, if no other effective course is available, they must be accepted rather than run the grave risk to our national security involved in allowing the weapons to remain in Cuba.

Accordingly, I would reject the blockade course insofar as it is designed to lead to negotiations either in the UN or direct with Khrushchev.

If militarily acceptable, I would prefer to initiate action with a blockade and intensive <sup>low-level</sup> ~~low-level~~ surveillance, coupled

coupled with ~~an element~~ a demand on Cuba to immediately remove ~~at~~ the weapons and to accept international inspection, beginning within 24 hours. ~~to~~ In the event of Cuban refusal, the air strike would follow immediately, no later than 72 hours after the initial public statement.

If this is not militarily acceptable or if such delay would involve unacceptable risks of the use of nuclear weapons from Cuba against the US, I would favor an early  
in  
strike/accordance with the air strike course of action.

In such a situation, I believe that, in the interests of the survival of the entire free world fabric, we must be prepared to accept the public opinion results of a surprise ~~xxxxx~~ strike, placing the full blame on Cuba for ignoring our clear and repeated warnings as well as the strong views of the other American states.

*Doyle*